



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: December 5, 2019

Agenda Item: 2020-2021 Hunting Season Dates

Action Needed: Proposed

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 Minutes

Background: Season dates are currently adopted biennially for all game species. This happens every other winter with adoptions in December and final adoptions in February. These dates are a combination of fixed dates (mountain grouse season Sept. 1 opener) and “formula” dates (general deer and elk is defined by counting backwards five weeks from Thanksgiving Sunday). For the “formula” dates, there is an annual change due to the progression of the calendar from one year to another. That means at least one day’s difference and, periodically, nearly a full week. In some cases, these annual movements can place season dates in conflict with public expectations or traditions. Some specific areas have exceptions to these general statewide dates by species. Those exceptions are also proposed again for 2020 and 2021 or are proposed to be different within individual species-specific proposals.

There are no proposed changes in date definitions, and a table with the proposed 2020-2021 season dates is in the commission packet. The proposed 2020 two-day statewide youth deer hunting season scheduled during MEA days will overlap the last Thursday and Friday of the statewide archery season. The proposed youth hunt days for 2021 will not overlap and will occur on the Thursday and Friday of the week between archery and general seasons.

Alternatives and Analysis: Proposals may be adopted as proposed, with adjustment, with additions, with deletions, or no change from 2019 (status quo).

Public Involvement Process & Results: Nineteen season date comments were received during the Aug. 15 – Sep. 16 scoping and comments varied. A few spoke to not liking overlaps between archery and youth deer hunting. In addition to public comment taken during the Dec. 5 commission meeting, public comment will run through 5 p.m., Jan. 22, 2020. Any final adoptions will take place at the February 2020 commission meeting.

Proposed Motion: I move the commission adopt for public comment the 2020 and 2021 hunting seasons dates as proposed by FWP.